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MONTANA LABOR MARKET RECEIVED

Monthly Review of
EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENT JUN 5 1957

MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

Albert F. Root, Commissioner

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FL-172

JUNE, 1957

Record May Employment Set in Montana Industry

Number of wage earners on industrial and commercial payrolls in Montana continued to rise seasonally during May, advancing by 5,900 workers to a state record May total of 168,900, according to estimates by the commission and U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The April figure was 163,000. In May of 1956 the previous record for the month was established at 167,000. In May, 1950, the level was 142,100. All-time record was set in August last year, with 177,500.

Still 8,600 Below 1956 Peak

The employment in total was 11,100 above that in February, indicating seasonal recovery to that extent. The seasonal decline from last August to February was 19,700, or about 11 percent. This leaves 8,600 yet to be made up if the 1957 employment peak is to equal that of the preceding year.

Construction Dominates Gain

The seasonal gain in wage earner total, from April to May payrolls, was dominated by construction contractors, who furnished 3,100 added job stations during the month. The bulk of this rise came in other than building, including dams, highway construction, bridges, powerlines, civic and irrigation facilities, and the like. Construction employment rose from 10,700 in April to 13,800 in May.

Logging is Less Active

Logging and lumbering picked up 900 in number of seasonal wage earners during the month, but was still 300 below the year ago level. The lag is ascribed to market weakness resulting from widespread curtailment of residence building. Employment in the timber industry was 7,100 this May, 7,400 a year ago.

Tourist Travel Affects Employment

Retail and wholesale trade, service industries, and the transportation group responded to the seasonal influence of expanding tourist travel and the resumption of spring activities in other lines with respective gains of 900, 400 and 600 over April. Government also was up 300 for the month. Mining registered a minor dip of 200 in total, largely from migration of miners to outside work for the summer.

Up 1,900 from Year Ago

Employment gain of 1,900 over figures of a year ago included 1,100 in construction, again in the "other than building" category; 500 in trade, all of it coming in expanded wholesale crews; 500 in service industries, 300 in finance and insurance, and 100 in manufacturing. Processing of ores from the state's metal mines gave manufacturing a 500 boost which was almost wiped out by the 300 recession in lumber and 100 in food processing. Transportation and utilities also receded, by 400, centered in interstate railroads and reflecting technological changes.

OVERSUPPLY OF JOB-APPLICANTS PERSISTS INTO JUNE AT STARTING LEVEL ABOVE 9,000

Montana's over-supply of work-applicants as related to available job openings persisted through May, the month ending with 9,000 jobseekers having no job. This was the largest carryover into June of active jobseekers since depression days of about 20 years ago. It compares with 5,100 a year ago, 4,300 four years ago, and 3,300 five years back. Nearest approach was in the slow-economy year of 1950, when there were 6,750 jobseekers at the end of May. These figures are derived from active work applications at the 22 Montana offices of the employment service.

Down 3,000 from Record May Supply

A month ago there were 12,000 of these jobseekers in the same files, indicating a net shrinkage of 3,000 over the month. While this is about a normal decline for the April to May period, the catch is that it operates this year from a base supply that was much more ponderous in April than in the same month of any recent year. Hence the carryover into June presents an economic challenge which will bear watching.

Work-Applicant Count in Review

	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951
February	16,695	13,061	12,304	12,455	10,995	10,136	12,336
April	12,066	7,974	9,227	8,945	6,043	5,705	7,048
May	9,032	5,105	5,565	6,191	4,324	3,276	4,312
June	7,500*	4,694	5,274	5,403	3,910	2,957	4,240
August		2,808	2,458	3,519	2,069	1,619	2,370
October		3,763	3,348	4,038	2,688	1,955	2,572
December		10,325	9,351	8,613	7,932	7,517	6,694

*Estimated.

School Youths to be Added

With 3,900 more unemployed jobseekers in the labor market this month than a year ago, and similar 4,100 margin at the beginning of May, an impressive employment problem is beginning to unfold. Release of six to eight thousand additional potential workers from the schools and colleges as classrooms close for the summer does not simplify the problem. Part, but not all, of the margin probably results from a lag in resumption of seasonal work. More of it is evidently the result of an available working force that is growing at a more rapid pace than the number of job openings into which they can fit.

Claim Volume Also High

Another evidence of the employment dilemma is furnished by the volume of claims for unemployment insurance. They all arise from persons who have been employed in industry and are currently unemployed. Last week there were approximately 4,300 in claim status, more than 2,300 above the figure for a year ago. In addition some 1,500 have exhausted their benefit series since January 1, and for relatively few of these has a new benefit year opened. The claim load during April, May, and into June has been the heaviest for corresponding months of any year in the decade.

Construction Hiring at Encouraging Pace

Construction employment is a major factor in the annual seasonal upswing of job openings in the spring months. It has performed a yeoman service this year in absorbing numbers of workers commensurate with its releases of last fall and winter. Some Montana areas report sluggishness in labor demand from construction contractors,

while in general the tone is optimistic. Dams, power plants, utilities, commercial and public service buildings, and some residence construction, along with an active road and bridge building schedule, are using skills and services in record volume.

Huge Road Program Helps

Contractors on the state highway system employed 1,202 workers on nearly 400 miles of road work and \$3,000,000 worth of bridges in May, contrasted with 692 workers on similar projects a month earlier, and with 1,453 in May, 1956. Maintenance and repair crews on the highway system numbered 689 last month and 733 in May a year ago.

Substantial Backlog of New Jobs

Contracts were already let but work not in progress on 150 miles of road construction and nearly \$3,000,000 worth of bridges and facilities. A year ago the similar backlog included 75 miles of highway and \$1.2 million worth of bridges. Most of this work is conducted on a seasonal basis.

Faltering Market Faces Timberman

In the logging and lumbering industry the picture is not quite so bright. A faltering market demand inherited from last fall discourages expansion in the timber field, which is also a major factor in seasonal variations. Substantial hiring for this work in May still fell short of absorbing the full supply of workers customarily on the payroll at this time.

Copper Demand Also Down

A similar market situation in copper is tending to halt the build-up of metal miners which has been the goal of that industry for many months. Most of the mines are cut back to a five-day week, from six, and hiring of new workers has been curtailed.

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary June 1

ANACONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg— (154 jobseekers, 35 new; 74 men, 80 women). Transient flow increasing in volume, labor demand weak, due in part to adverse weather, but to greater extent because of sagging markets. Heavy turnover at smelters has pared total employment there, will be recruited from college youths and high school graduates for the summer.

BILLINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Hysham, Laurel, Red Lodge, Roundup—(1,713 job-seekers, 536 new; 1,331 men, 382 women). Contract construction has been slow in opening up this season. About 700 building trade applicants in list, along with surplus labor in most other branches. Flow of transients is above normal for the season; their good quality reflects lack of jobs in other areas. Adequate farm labor supply except for irrigators and married couples.

BOZEMAN, Ennis, Three Forks, Trident—(352 jobseekers, 136 new; 180 men, 172 women). More than sufficient local labor supply has been available through the spring season. The cement plant at Trident has a normal summer force of 165, about fifty percent above its midwinter low. Inside work continues on high school and physical education building, both finishing this summer. Road and bridge jobs fully staffed.

BUTTE, Virginia City, Whitehall—(552 jobseekers, 342 new; 304 men, 248 women). Mining employment is slowed by lower price levels in copper market. Opening of one new shaft for open-pit recovery of ore is under way, another to start in July. Special skills brought in for the work. Building program throughout area is tardy in getting under way. Surplus of carpenters and operating engineers, but shortage of structural iron workers, welders, and boilermakers.

CUT BANK—(135 jobseekers. 70 new; 106 men, 29 women). Employment at construction and in oil field work remained at low spring level through May, very little demand. A new gymnasium is to be started in June and summer work in the Park is opening. Tourist volume is beginning to stimulate hiring in sales and service field. Farm hiring is on slow schedule.

DILLON—(93 jobseekers, 49 new; 53 men, 40 women). Late season for agricultural crops has deferred the expected shortage of irrigators and farm cooks. Construction attained momentum in May; building of dormitory and cottages, and residences, called for 35 to 50 workers. A phosphate mine idle since December is to open in June, with a crew of 75.

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Malta, Opheim
—(155 jobseekers, 132 new; 94 men, 61

LABOR MARKET INDICATORS

Employment—	May 1957	April 1957	May 1956	May Avg. 1950-1956
Industrial Employment	168,900	163,000	167,000	157,100
New Job Applicants	3,289	3,764	3,658	2,837
Job Applicants, End of Month	9,032	12,066	5,105	5,077
 Insured Unemployment—	 June 7 1957	 May 10 1957	 June 8 1956	 Avg. 1st Wk. June 1950-1956
New and Renewal Claims	487	419	195	229
Unemployed Weeks Filed	3,804	6,000	1,761	1,938
Total Unemployment Claims	4,291	6,419	1,956	2,167

women). Construction hiring accelerated during late May, though the main project, airbase, reached only the 200 worker stage, against 425 a year ago. Contract has been let for building 200 housing units, probably start in July. The new power house at Fort Peck is under way, with a crew of 80. Other building work includes school house, electric building, gas station, and two road jobs. Farm help is scarce.

GLENDIVE, Circle, Wibaux—(102 job-seekers, 91 new; 62 men, 40 women). Oil field activity slowed in May, some crews transferred to other areas. Construction demand has been steady, but not pressing; home building is lagging, a new school building has been started. Seasonal track labor has been recruited for the railroad. Completion of spring planting eased off farm labor shortage.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, Stanford—(828 jobseekers. 448 new; 527 men, 301 women). Principal hiring activities have been the citywide street project and the new power dam, now using about 500 in their crews. Airbase construction program is just beginning to emerge from winter lethargy, but ample labor supply is at hand. Migrant workers have sustained a consistent surplus through the spring, and will be supplemented by school youths as classrooms close.

HAMILTON, Stevensville — (381 job-seekers, 53 new; 278 men, 103 women). Employment is less and unemployment greater than a year ago. Very little construction in progress or planned, logging and lumbering have not resumed in full strength after the winter shutdown. Several sawmills expected to remain idle indefinitely. Full crew is back to work in fluorspar mine, after usual winter shutdown.

HAVRE, Chinook, Harlem — (102 job-seekers, 103 new; 60 men, 42 women). Transient labor is abundant and registration of students has begun. Railroad work will be a big factor in employment through the summer. Construction programs includes highway jobs, street paving, new bank building, and remodelling of several business

structures. Shortage of carpenters and plumbers is anticipated.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison, Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—(255 jobseekers, 231 new; 196 men, 59 women). Heavy construction has been slow in getting started this season and new projects of substantial employment nature are scarce. Contractors on the irrigation project have hired sparingly to date, work on canals is scarcely started and the reservoir crew is not up to expected volume. Sawmill and woods work is resuming. Small mines in area not opening up on normal seasonal pattern.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Libby, Whitefish — (1,870 jobseekers, 235 new; 1,520 men, 350 women). Recruitment for operation of cherry warehouse has begun. Trade and service establishments provided the principal labor market demand in May. Lumber and logging demand was lighter than a year ago, some of the smaller operators indicating no activity at all this season, due to weakness of lumber markets. Contract let for radar station, expected to stimulate demand in July. Other construction expanding moderately.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—(127 jobseekers, 32 new; 87 men, 40 women). Agricultural demand up through May, supply short. Construction of radar station has begun, with partial crew already recruited, expansion expected through July and August. Other building projects are slow in getting started. Highway jobs have full crews, bridge job proceeding with small crew. Forest service has manned its construction and maintenance projects.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timber — (216 job-seekers, 52 new; 129 men, 87 women). Increasing demand for construction skills was felt in late May. Yellowstone Park project resuming at full scale, good progress on bridge job. Railroad re-conversion project on shops is nearing completion. Several extra gangs operating out of this railway center. Lumber employment has slumped; soft roads idled woods crews and truckers. Outlook for balance of summer is favorable.

EIGHT YEARS OF MONTANA INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS, BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary June 1

(Continued from previous page)

MILES CITY, Baker, Broadus, Ekalaka, Forsyth, Colstrip, Jordan, Terry—(149 jobseekers, 94 new; 108 men, 41 women). Building program confined to small units, resulting in limited labor demand. Projects at Baker, Broadus, and Forsyth have absorbed most of the best qualified workers. Hiring for trade and service establishments has been light all spring. Farm hiring was at its peak in May, with demand and supply about in balance.

MISSOULA, Drummond, Arlee, Superior—(989 jobseekers, 287 new; 761 men, 228 women). Employment picture has improved, but is still short of peak proportions. Two main factors, lumber and construction, are below the normal level of activity for this season. Lumber market apathy is still holding down sawmill and woods work; construction hiring is slow, lack of large projects. A new bridge contract has been let and should be begun by July. Increased track crews organized in May for railroad repair.

POLSON—(317 jobseekers, 87 new; 261 men, 56 women). Two sawmills are now operating after the winter seasonal interruptions; plywood plant had resumed but was halted again by lack of logs. Soft roads continued to hamper log deliveries until early June. Work on new highway contract has begun with partial crew, ample labor supply at hand. Service station and store building under construction in Polson.

SHELBY, Chester, Conrad—(112 jobseekers, 134 new; 83 men, 29 women). Most of the supply of construction labor is now employed on various smaller projects. Street paving and curbing, repair of buildings, a number of residences nearing completion, and two highway re-construction jobs in Shelby and vicinity, and school addition, grain elevator and swimming pool in adjacent territory, furnished bulk of May demand. Agricultural hiring heavy in May, normally recedes in June.

SIDNEY—(111 jobseekers, 46 new; 68 men, 43 women). Construction labor demand unchanged through May. Building of power plant occupies about 100 workers, with other demands from additions to school and hospital, a new business block, and residence construction which is below the 1956 level. One road project scheduled to start in July. Heavy demand for farm labor met in May.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—(210 jobseekers, 43 new; 160 men, 50 women). Employment in woods and sawmills slowly resuming, delayed by excessive moisture. Contractors at Noxon dam project have built up payrolls to 1,000 with 27 firms and will climb still further in June and July. Installing of new water system in Thompson Falls and completion of one business building and start of another are proceeding with full crews.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scobey—(109 jobseekers, 53 new; 78 men, 31 women). Registration of students for summer work begun. Construction hiring has been less active than in normal seasons. Projects include two highways, three bridge contracts, an elevator and several residences. Expect street improvement, airport paving, business buildings, and homes to be started in July and August.

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT			Net Change	
	May 1957 (2)	April 1957 (3)	May 1956	Apr. '57 to May '57	May '56 to May '57
NONAGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES...					
Manufacturing.....	20,500	19,700	20,400	800	100
Durable goods.....	13,300	12,600	13,100	700	200
Lumber and timber products.....	7,100	6,200	7,400	900	300
Primary metals.....	5,000	5,100	4,500	— 100	500
Other (4).....	1,200	1,300	1,200	— 100	0
Nondurable goods.....	7,200	7,100	7,300	100	— 100
Food and kindred products.....	3,300	3,200	3,400	100	— 100
Printing and publishing.....	1,600	1,600	1,600	0	0
Petroleum refining.....	1,200	1,300	1,200	— 100	0
Other (5).....	1,100	1,000	1,100	100	0
Mining.....	12,100	12,300	12,200	— 200	— 100
Metal mining.....	8,400	8,600	8,600	— 200	— 200
Coal, quarrying and nonmetallic.....	800	800	800	0	0
Petroleum-natural gas production.....	2,900	2,900	2,800	0	100
Contract Construction.....	13,800	10,700	12,700	3,100	1,100
Contractors, building construction.....	4,700	4,100	4,700	600	0
Contractors, other than building.....	5,000	3,100	4,300	1,900	700
Contractors, special trade.....	4,100	3,500	3,700	600	400
Transportation and utilities.....	21,600	21,000	22,000	600	— 400
Interstate railroads.....	12,000	11,500	12,500	500	— 500
Transportation except railroads.....	3,800	3,800	3,800	0	0
Utilities including communication.....	5,800	5,700	5,700	100	100
Trade.....	41,700	40,800	41,200	900	500
Wholesale trade.....	9,700	9,500	9,100	200	600
Retail trade.....	32,000	31,300	32,100	700	— 100
General merchandise and apparel.....	5,800	5,800	6,100	0	300
Food stores.....	4,700	4,800	4,800	— 100	— 100
Eating and drinking establishments.....	8,600	8,100	8,100	500	500
Automotive and filling stations.....	6,400	6,100	6,300	300	100
Retail trade not elsewhere classified.....	6,500	6,500	6,800	0	— 300
Finance, insurance and real estate.....	5,900	5,900	5,600	0	300
Services and miscellaneous.....	21,900	21,500	21,400	400	500
Hotels, rooming houses, camps, etc.....	3,100	2,800	3,000	300	100
Personal services.....	2,400	2,400	2,300	0	100
Other (6).....	16,400	16,300	16,100	100	300
Government.....	31,400	31,100	31,500	300	— 100
Federal.....	7,800	7,700	7,800	100	0
State and local.....	23,600	23,400	23,700	200	— 100
Great Falls Area (Cascade County).....	20,500	19,800	19,300	700	1,200
Manufacturing.....	3,000	3,000	2,800	0	200
Contract construction.....	2,300	1,600	1,900	700	400
Transportation and utilities.....	2,400	2,400	2,400	0	0
Trade, wholesale and retail.....	6,300	6,300	6,000	0	300
Services and miscellaneous (7).....	4,000	4,000	3,800	0	200
Government.....	2,500	2,500	2,400	0	100

(1) Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members, personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants, and self-employed persons are excluded.

(2) Preliminary estimates based on return from sample of 577 selected Montana establishments.

(3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,005 such establishments.

(4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and clay products.

(5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products.

(6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation, medical and health, law offices and professional services, nonprofit membership organizations and business not otherwise classified.

(7) Same as (6) above, also includes finance, real estate and mining.

COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET TRANSACTIONS IN MAY, 1957 AND MAY, 1956

Employment Service Office	New Job Applicants				Jobseekers in File				Job Placements								U. I. Claims	
	May 1957		May 1956		May 1957		May 1956		May, 1956				May, 1957				Wk. 6-7	
	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	1957	1956
Anaconda.....	35	6	20	5	154	34	66	19	44	19	63	25	43	21	64	15	109	30
Billings.....	536	152	590	238	1,713	569	599	206	463	603	1,066	250	424	450	874	272	641	285
Bozeman.....	130	30	144	32	352	63	257	69	202	122	324	91	290	152	442	132	59	13
Butte.....	342	123	451	179	552	108	638	166	137	43	180	71	217	46	263	106	382	213
Cut Bank.....	70	21	79	28	135	56	117	32	42	69	111	60	75	73	148	85	80	37
Dillon.....	49	15	54	24	93	15	78	18	36	108	144	85	45	111	156	77	41	26
Glasgow.....	132	30	166	49	155	29	140	37	231	88	319	167	219	57	276	145	50	40
Glendive.....	91	25	125	42	102	26	52	19	117	476	593	93	110	211	321	78	29	16
Great Falls...	448	128	366	96	828	223	430	107	413	195	608	296	408	180	588	263	399	197
Hamilton.....	53	15	57	18	381	78	113	27	45	168	213	24	44	369	413	21	122	44
Havre.....	103	32	99	22	102	29	105	10	387	103	490	234	255	87	342	192	69	26
Helena.....	231	85	274	97	255	84	158	42	133	46	179	72	157	95	252	97	205	100
Kalispell.....	235	56	279	48	1,870	610	733	219	172	33	205	73	147	32	179	69	819	367
Lewistown.....	32	6	42	17	127	35	62	16	85	55	140	69	28	40	68	33	58	29
Livingston.....	52	18	140	32	216	59	216	68	50	60	110	60	75	67	142	68	113	98
Miles City.....	94	35	107	39	149	45	116	35	88	399	487	56	77	314	391	53	75	46
Missoula.....	287	114	256	83	989	369	604	193	212	258	470	152	240	383	623	142	506	164
Polson.....	87	22	84	23	317	97	169	61	77	36	113	37	66	35	101	30	198	57
Shelby.....	134	53	143	52	112	33	75	10	145	167	312	129	103	122	225	80	48	30
Sidney.....	46	5	51	9	111	18	93	12	47	720	767	23	44	682	726	21	44	31
Thomp. Falls.....	43	9	43	14	210	59	216	72	82	2	84	33	35	—	35	11	181	92
Wolf Point.....	53	18	88	27	109	27	68	18	46	78	124	35	64	93	157	38	63	15
TOTALS.....	3,289	1,004	3,658	1,174	9,032	2,666	5,105	1,456	3,254	3,848	7,102	2,135	3,166	3,620	6,786	2,028	4,291	1,956

*Includes 129 claims of Federal Employees UC Program, 50 same a year ago.

AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)
(Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

INDUSTRY	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	May (1) 1957	Apr. (2) 1957	May 1956	May (1) 1957	Apr. (2) 1957	May 1956	May (1) 1957	Apr. (2) 1957	May 1956
All Manufacturing.....	\$88.31	\$88.87	\$90.74	40.1	40.3	41.0	2.20	2.21	2.21
Durable goods.....	88.70	89.29	92.13	40.8	41.1	41.8	2.17	2.17	2.20
Primary metals.....	94.35	94.35	98.70	41.6	41.6	45.1	2.27	2.27	2.19
Nondurable goods.....	87.38	88.09	87.92	38.6	38.6	39.5	2.27	2.29	2.23
Food and kindred products.....	72.15	70.33	72.38	39.0	38.4	39.8	1.85	1.83	1.82
All Mining.....	95.85	96.18	102.48	38.7	38.8	41.8	2.48	2.48	2.45
Metal mining.....	94.22	94.49	102.80	38.3	38.3	42.2	2.46	2.47	2.44
Transportation and Utilities (except railroads.)	87.19	87.42	83.53						
Transportation (except railroads).....	107.49	107.98	98.68	39.3	39.3	40.6	1.97	1.97	1.87
Utilities and communication.....	77.48	77.53	76.00						

(1) Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMMISSION OF MONTANA

MITCHELL BUILDING

P. O. Box 1728

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